

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00951 220553Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 AS-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 EB-07 AID-05
IGA-02 /070 W

-----037344 220556Z /21

R 220400Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8242

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0951

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: EAID LA AU

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIANS CANCEL THAKHEK WATER PROJECT

REF: VIENTIANE 0214 AND PREVIOUS

1. AN AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT TOLD EMBOFF JUNE 21 THAT
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED AGAINST FUNDING A
US \$4 MILLION WATER PROJECT FOR THAKHEK, DESCRIBED
REFTEL.

2. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY HAD
UNENTHUSIASTICALLY RECOMMENDED FINAL APPROVAL OF THE
PROJECT, THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO DROP THE
PROJECT WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER CINSIDERATION FOR 18
MONTHS, OFFERING THE FOLLOWING REASONS: 1) THE PROJECT
WAS TOO LARGE AND TOO EXPENSIVE FOR A TOWN OF ONLY
12,000 PEOPLE; 2) TRANSPORT OF 1200 TONS OF STEEL AND
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00951 220553Z

CONCRETE PLUS EQUIPMENT FROM AUSTRALIA, THROUGH
THAILAND TO VIENTIANE AND THEN DOWN LAO NATIONAL ROUTE
13 TO THAKHEK WOULD BE COSTLY AND PROBLEM-RIDDEN;
3) TRAVEL BETWEEN THAKHEK AND VIENTIANE FOR AUSTRALIAN
PROJECT TECHNICIANS WOULD BE DIFFICULT AND POSSIBLY
DANGEROUS.

3. THE DIPLOMAT SAID THAT THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR HAD EXPLAINED THE AUSTRALIAN DECISION TO DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER NOUPHAN AND THAT HE HAD "TAKEN IT WELL" THOUGH REQUESTING THAT THE AUSTRALIANS QUICKLY BEGIN CONSIDERATION OF SOME OTHER PROJECT OF SIMILAR SIZE.

4. THE DIPLOMAT TOLD EMBOFF THAT IT SEEMED UNLIKELY THAT THEY COULD FIND ANOTHER PROJECT WORTHY OF \$US 4 MILLION INVESTMENT OVER A TWO YEAR PERIOD UNLESS THEY "JUST GAVE THEM A BUNCH OF GOODIES LIKE THE SWEDES AND THE JAPANESE." HE SAID THAT HE EXPECTED THE AUSTRALIANS WOULD SEEK TO EXPAND AUSTRALIAN FUNDED PASTURELAND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS ALREADY IN OPERATION IN THE VIENTIANE PLAIN, ADDING THAT HE DOUBTED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN THE LAO GOVERNMENT'S AGREEMENT TO SEND AUSTRALIAN TECHNICIANS OUTSIDE THE VIENTIANE PLAIN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 22-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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